

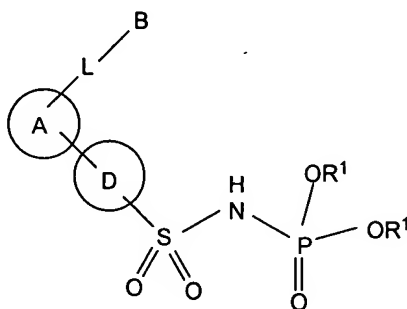
Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-41. Cancelled.

42. (New) A compound of general formula I:



I

wherein:

each R¹ independently represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl, phenyl, heteroaryl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl, where all phenyl and heteroaryl rings can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups, or both substituents R¹ may be taken together to form a saturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring, which can be optionally fused to a benzene ring;

A represents an unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring which can optionally contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, where the substituents L and D are placed on adjacent atoms of ring A, and where additionally A can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R^2 ;

L represents a single bond, -O-, -S- or -NR³-;

B represents C₁₋₆ alkyl or a ring selected from phenyl, heteroaryl and C₃₋₇ cycloalkyl, where all said rings can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R^4 ;

D represents phenyl or pyridine, each of which can be optionally substituted with one or more halogens;

the groups A and -SO₂NHP(O)(OR¹)₂ are placed on ring D in *para* position with respect to one another;

each R^2 independently represents halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₂₋₄ alkenyl, C₂₋₄ alkynyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, hydroxy, C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy, C₁₋₄ alkylthio, amino, C₁₋₄ alkylamino, C₁₋₄ dialkylamino, formyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxycarbonyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxycarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyloxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, C₃₋₇ cycloalkylC₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl or C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, or two substituents R^2 on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group;

R^3 represents hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl;

each R⁴ independently represents halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, hydroxy, C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy, C₁₋₄ alkylthio, amino, C₁₋₄ alkylamino, C₁₋₄ dialkylamino, formyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy carbonyl or C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy carbonyl, or two substituents R⁴ on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group, and additionally one of the substituents R⁴ can represent a saturated, unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring which can optionally contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S and which can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R⁵;

each R⁵ independently represents halogen, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, amino, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy or C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, or two substituents R⁵ on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group; and heteroaryl in the above definitions represents pyridine, pyrazine, pyrimidine or pyridazine; or a salt and or solvate thereof.

43. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4H-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R².

44. (New) A compound according to claim 43 wherein A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole or oxazole which can be optionally substituted with one or two substituents R².

45. (New) A compound according to claim 44 wherein A represents imidazole which can be optionally substituted with one substituent R².

46. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein each R² independently represents halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, or two substituents R² on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group.

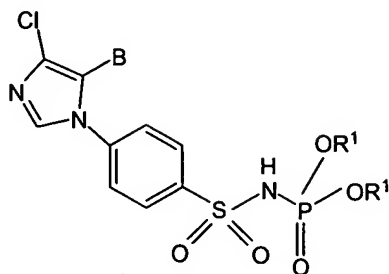
47. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom.

48. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein L represents a single bond.

49. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R⁴ or B represents cyclohexyl.

50. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein each R⁴ independently represents halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy or C₁₋₄ haloalkyl.

51. (New) A compound according to claim 42 of formula Id:



Id

wherein:

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R⁴; and

each R⁴ independently represents halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy or C₁₋₄ haloalkyl.

52. (New) A compound according to claim 51 wherein B represents 3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl.

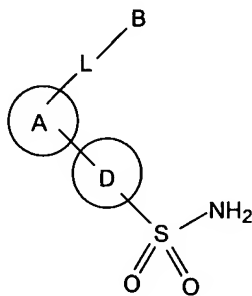
53. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein each R¹ independently represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups.

54. (New) A compound according to claim 42 wherein the compound is N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid, or a salt or solvate thereof.

55. (New) A compound according to claim 54 wherein the compound is N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid.

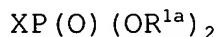
56. (New) Process for preparing a compound of formula I according to claim 42 which comprises:

(a) when in a compound of formula I each R^1 is different from hydrogen, reacting a sulfonamide of formula II



II

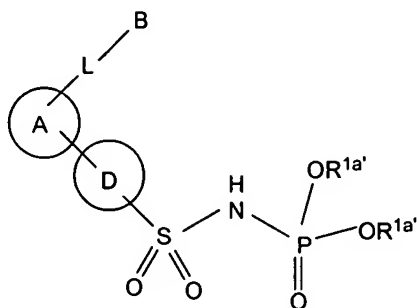
wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described in claim 42, with a compound of formula III



III

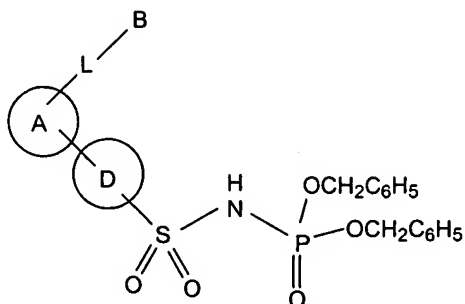
wherein X represents H or Cl and wherein each R^{1a} independently represents any of the meanings described for R^1 in claim 42 except for hydrogen, in the presence of a base, or alternatively,

reacting a sulfonamide of formula II in which the group $-\text{SO}_2\text{NH}_2$ is in anionic form with a compound of formula III; or
(b) when in a compound of formula I each R^1 represents hydrogen, hydrolyzing a compound of formula Ia'



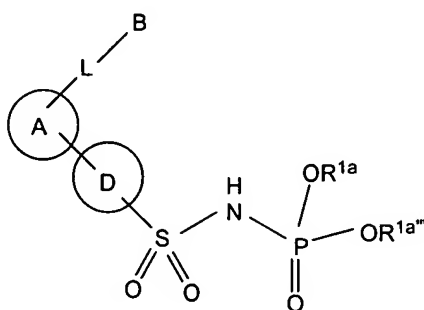
Ia'

wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described in claim 42 and wherein $\text{R}^{1a'}$ represents any of the meanings described for R^1 in claim 42 except for hydrogen and benzyl, or alternatively, hydrogenating a compound of formula Ia''



Ia''

wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described in claim 42; or
(c) when in a compound of formula I one of the substituents R¹ represents hydrogen and the other is different from hydrogen, monodealkylating a compound of formula Ia'''



Ia'''

wherein A, L, B, D and R^{1a} have the meaning described above and wherein R^{1a'''} represents C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl, where the phenyl group can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups; or
(d) transforming, in one or a plurality of steps, a compound of formula I into another compound of formula I.

57. (New) The process of claim 56, which further comprises reacting the compound of formula I with a base or an acid to give the corresponding addition salt.

58. (New) A pharmaceutical composition which comprises an effective amount of a compound of formula I according to claim 42 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.

59. (New) A method for the treatment or prevention of diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase-2, which comprises administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of formula I according to claim 42 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof.

60. (New) The method of claim 58 wherein the disease mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 is selected from inflammation, pain, fever, pathologies associated with prostanoid-induced smooth muscle contraction, preneoplastic disorders, cancer, cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and vascular diseases with an inflammatory component.

61. (New) The method of claim 59 wherein the disease mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 is selected from inflammation, pain and fever.

62. (New) The method of claim 59 wherein the disease mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 is selected from the group consisting of: pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis; degenerative joint diseases; gout;

ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain or inflammation associated with sprains, strains or other traumatisms; synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease; ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases; systemic inflammatory processes; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; symptoms associated with influenza or other viral infections; preterm labour; asthma; bronchitis; familial adenomatous polyposis; liver cancer; bladder cancer; pancreatic cancer; ovarian cancer; prostate cancer; cervical cancer; lung cancer; breast cancer; skin cancer; gastrointestinal cancers; cerebral infarction; epilepsy; type I diabetes; dementia; Parkinson's disease; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; and atherosclerosis.